

TALES OF THE RIVERMAN 55

A student attending Glasgow University joined the University rowing club. Every time he passed our wharfage on his way home from rowing practice, he would stop and ask if there was any assistance I required. Nothing was too much trouble for him. We became very good friends.

For a short time we did a double scull and he managed to pull me over courses for a few wins. Honed as near as we could to perfection, we were favourites for the Scottish Championship Doubles being held at Strathclyde Park.



Emergency call put paid to that when, just as we were pushing the double out from the landing stage to go for a warm up scull, the high pitched bleep of the pager round my neck was heard.

I pressed the button on my mobile, and the Duty Officer at Force Control informed me that my assistance was required to bring a body off an island on the river Clyde, indeed not far from where I was at Strathclyde Park.

A Police towing vehicle was bringing my boat from Glasgow Green and a car was now being sent to the Park to pick me up.

My sculling partner of course knew this could happen, and was left to get someone to help him lift our double back out of the water onto the trailer, and inform Race Control that we had scratched.

Arriving at the locus I was informed that the body was among a large pile of dead trees that had washed downriver over the years and piled up

against the upstream end of the island.



The Force Helicopter HM1 landed on the riverbank a short distance from where we were congregated and I was taken up and flown over the island to show me where the body was lying.



The boat was launched and I ferried Police Officers across to the Island, CID, then photographers, scenes of crime and Casualty Surgeon. The body which had been for some time exposed to the blazing sun was placed carefully and respectfully in blankets, brought across to where the boat was and then by boat across to the mainland from where Police arranged its removal.





There was no returning however to Strathclyde Park as I received a message from F Division Control that my services were again required as a young girl had drowned while swimming with friends a few miles upriver from Glasgow Green. And so I was again conveyed into what we called the County, and after a short search I achieved a recovery. It is always sad to read the headlines that accompany such a tragedy, **“Never Again In That River”** “This heartbreak is too much for any family.”

What is even sadder is that people forget these incidents quite quickly and it is not long before we have similar tragedies.

It was late on in the evening that I finally returned home.

My sculling partner may have missed out on a Scottish Championship Medal, but he stayed a friend, to me to my family and to the Glasgow Humane Society.

He did go on to row internationally, our sons scull together and against each other, and he still comes down to help at the Lifeboat Station.

